

# ALWAYS ABOUT JESUS

*by Madison Chrestman*



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# **ALWAYS ABOUT JESUS**

*A Festive Fifties Flashback*

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**SYNOPSIS:** Break out the bobby sox and saddle shoes—this play offers a side order of nostalgia with a blue plate special of Christmas! A grandmother and her granddaughters pore over photos of Christmases in the 1950s—an era of ice skating on a frozen pond, board games, and bubble lights on the tree. A scene from "back then" unfolds, with young Nana fascinated by a story about missionary Lottie Moon, "The Cookie Lady." She baked as a way of building trust with Chinese villagers. This inspires the family to spread good cheer by taking Mama's homemade cookies to the local nursing home. Back in the present, Nana's granddaughters see that though much has changed since the Fabulous Fifties, Christmas was—and always will be—about Jesus. This performance features easy nonspeaking roles in the Nativity scene and many roles for females of all ages, as well as vintage costuming opportunities, from poodle skirts to ponytails.

**CAST OF CHARACTERS***(9 females, 2 males)***MODERN-DAY FAMILY:**

- NANA (f) ..... Grandmother of the children who loves Christmas and sharing stories of the past with her grandchildren. *(21 lines)*
- ALEXIS (f)..... The oldest of the grandchildren at fourteen years old. She is your typical young teen who complains about not getting the cell phone she wanted for Christmas. However, like the other grandchildren, she is quickly pulled into Nana's reminiscing upon seeing pictures of Nana at her own age. *(7 lines)*

- KATIE (f).....The next oldest granddaughter, possibly eleven to twelve years old. She is somewhat concerned about fashion and is eager to hear her grandmother's stories of the past. (5 lines)
- EMILY (f).....One of two younger granddaughters who are curious about the details of Nana's story (single-digit age). (7 lines)
- BRITNEY (f).....The other younger granddaughter (single-digit age). (5 lines)

### 1950s FAMILY:

- MAMA (f).....Caring mother who is somewhat overprotective. (11 lines)
- DADDY (m).....Caring father who knows that sometimes kids just need to be kids. (7 lines)
- PATSY (f).....The oldest daughter, fourteen years old (young Nana), who loves reading and ice skating with her sisters. (11 lines)
- PAMELA (f).....The middle daughter who is quick to tease Peggy and remind her of her youth, but also enjoys ice skating with her sisters. (13 lines)
- PEGGY (f).....The youngest daughter who loves tagging along with her older sisters. Like typical younger kids, she wants to do everything her older sisters get to do. (14 lines)
- PETER (m).....A four-year-old boy who is excited about Christmas and loves showing off his new Mr. Potato Head. (Non-Speaking)

### NATIVITY CHARACTERS:

- MARY (f).....(Non-Speaking)
- JOSEPH (m).....(Non-Speaking)
- SHEPHERDS (m/f).....(Non-Speaking)
- ANGELS (m/f).....(Non-Speaking)
- WISE MEN (m).....(Non-Speaking)
- NARRATOR (m/f).....Monologue. Offstage voice. (1 line)

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## PRODUCTION NOTES

**SET:** Three sets are required for the production: one present-day living room scene, one 1950s living room (both decorated for Christmas), and a Nativity scene. Depending on the size of your sanctuary, the stage may be transformed from set to set between scenes or divided into three separate sections, with each already decorated for the different scenes. The modern-day living room needs furniture for Nana and the Grandkids to sit on, a decorated Christmas tree, and a table with a radio on it. The 1950s living room needs furniture for Mama, Daddy, and the kids to sit on, a decorated Christmas tree, and a table with an older-looking radio on it. If you use two trees, the '50s tree may be a white or other colored aluminum tree. You may decorate with bubble lights, icicles, and vintage ornaments, and place an electric train at its base. If you are only using one tree, decorate it simply (with glass ball ornaments and tinsel, for example), so it could be used in any era. The Nativity scene just needs a manger and something for Mary to sit on (if desired).

**CAST:** The cast may easily be made larger or smaller depending on the number of children and youth you are working with. If you have a smaller group, the modern-day family and the 1950s family may also play the Nativity roles, as the script suggests. In this case, a slideshow with music and pictures makes a nice distraction for the audience while the cast goes backstage and puts on their biblical costumes. If you are working with a larger group, the Nativity scene may be acted out by a completely different cast. For a larger cast, extra nonspeaking grandchildren and children may be added to the other scenes.

**COSTUMES:** For the modern-day scenes, Nana and the Grandchildren should wear church clothes (and Nana needs a watch). The 1950s family should be dressed in clothes suited to the time—possibly poodle skirts and ponytails for the girls, a full-skirted dress for Mama, a button-down shirt with a vest for Daddy, and suspenders for Peter. Traditional biblical costumes are required for the Nativity scene.

**PROPS**

- photo album
- tray with cookies
- basket (to put the cookies in)
- set of books (gift-wrapped)
- hula hoop (gift-wrapped)
- baby doll (gift-wrapped)
- Mr. Potato Head
- ice skates
- a few extra wrapped gifts
- checkerboard and checkers
- newspaper
- knitting needles and yarn
- baby doll wrapped in a blanket (for nativity)

**SONGS:** “O Come, All Ye Faithful,” “Silent Night,” “Angels We Have Heard on High,” and “Go, Tell It on the Mountain.” The first three should be prerecorded, with the last sung by the congregation.

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**SCENE 1**

**AT START:** *NANA and her grandkids, KATIE, EMILY, ALEXIS, and BRITNEY, are sitting by the Christmas tree looking at a photo album. The KIDS are pointing at pictures and giggling.*

**KATIE:** Did you really wear that, Nana?

**NANA:** We sure did. Poodle skirts were in style back then, just like people wear those \_\_\_\_\_ (*Insert plural form of current trendy fashion.*) now.

**EMILY:** Well, those poodle skirts sure look funny!

**NANA:** You think so? Well, you just wait. One of these days you'll be sitting around the Christmas tree looking at pictures with your grandkids, and they just might laugh at some of the things you wear now.

*NANA turns a page in the photo album.*

**NANA:** Oh, look at this one. This was my fourteenth birthday.

**ALEXIS:** When you were my age? Let me see!

*ALEXIS moves closer to look at the album.*

**BRITNEY:** What did you do for your birthday? What kind of cake did you have? What presents did you get?

**NANA:** Whoa! One question at a time. I went with a few of my friends to the movies. My mama made a chocolate cake—mmmm, that cake was good! And my favorite present that year was a gold taffeta dress with puffed sleeves that the seamstress next door made for me. I loved that dress!

**KATIE:** What about Christmas, Nana? Do you have any Christmas pictures?

**EMILY, BRITNEY, and ALEXIS:** (*Ad lib.*) Yeah! What about Christmas? Let's see! (*Etc.*)

**NANA:** I'm sure there are some in here. Let's see. Birthday, birthday, Easter, birthday... ah, here we are—Christmas. Christmas has always been my favorite holiday.

**ALL GRANDKIDS:** (*Ad lib enthusiastically.*) Mine too! Yeah, Christmas is awesome! I love getting presents! (*Etc.*)

**EMILY:** Can we see the pictures, Nana?

*NANA hands the photo album back to the KIDS.*

**NANA:** Christmas was always such a special time at our house. My whole family loved Christmas—opening presents and ice skating on the pond.

**BRITNEY:** You really went ice skating on a pond?

**NANA:** We sure did—on that pond, (*Points out over audience.*) right out there. We always had to wait and make sure the ice was good and thick so it would be just like an ice-skating rink. My sisters and I always had such a good time out there on that pond. Oh, speaking of my siblings, look at this picture. That's your Uncle Peter. Man, he sure was proud of that Mr. Potato Head he got that year.

**ALEXIS:** What did you get?

**NANA:** I got a *Chronicles of Narnia* book set, and we older kids each got a pair of ice skates that year. I remember we couldn't wait to get out there on that pond and try them out.

**ALEXIS:** *That* was your big present? And you were happy about it? I would've wanted something better than *Chronicles of Narnia* books or ice skates.

**NANA:** Oh, I loved reading those stories. *The Lion, The Witch and the Wardrobe* was my favorite. Those ice skates? They were a big hit. And if I remember correctly, young lady, you seemed just as happy with that pair of boots you opened this morning. Remember?

**ALEXIS:** (*Almost under her breath.*) I wanted a cell phone.

**NANA:** Things were different back then, sweetheart. Kids were happier with simpler presents. We were more patient, too. We never tried to find our presents and open them early.

**KATIE:** What else did you do besides open presents and go ice skating?

**NANA:** Well, one thing we used to do was sit together in the living room by the Christmas tree, just like we're doing right now, and sing along with the radio.

**EMILY:** Can we sing with the radio too?

**NANA:** You know what? That sounds like a good idea. Let's do it.

*NANA turns on the radio. "O Come, All Ye Faithful" is playing.*

**NANA:** "O Come, All Ye Faithful" ... I always loved to hear that song on the radio while we sat around playing games when we were kids!

*The lights go out on the present-day living room and come up on the 1950s living room. DADDY and the KIDS sing along to "O Come, All Ye Faithful" as DADDY flips through the paper and the KIDS play checkers. MAMA enters the room with a tray of cookies and a basket over her arm.*

## SCENE 2

**AT START:** *PEGGY jumps up excitedly.*

**PEGGY:** You made the cookies again this year!

**MAMA:** I do every year, dear. You know that.

**PAMELA:** May we have some now, Mama?

**MAMA:** There are extras in the kitchen that you may eat after dinner. I was hoping you girls would help me pack these up so we can take them to the homeless shelter.

**PEGGY:** Don't forget Santa! We have to leave some out for him.

**PATSY:** That's right, Peggy. We can't forget about him.

**PEGGY:** Why can't we have all the cookies? Why do we have to take most of them to the homeless people?

**DADDY:** Because that's our way of showing the love of Jesus to those who don't have as much as we have, honey.

**PATSY:** Like Lottie Moon.

**PEGGY:** Who's Lotta Moon? Somebody who did a lot of moon watching at night?

**PAMELA:** No, silly. Not Lotta Moon. Lottie Moon. Lottie is short for Charlotte. The kids in China called her "The Cookie Lady" because she baked treats for them.

**PATSY:** But she didn't just make cookies for them because she liked to bake. She was a missionary in China, and she used cookies as a way to make friends with the kids and their parents so she could tell them about Jesus.

**DADDY:** That's right, Patsy. (*Optional—you may include if your church takes a Lottie Moon Christmas offering.*) Peggy, do you remember the special offering we take at church every Christmas? That offering is called the Lottie Moon Christmas Offering.

**MAMA:** That's why we always take these cookies to the homeless shelter. At times, some of the people there ask why we bring them cookies, and that gives us a great opportunity to tell them about the love of Jesus and why he came to earth in the first place.

**PEGGY:** I like the story about Jesus being born in the stable and how Mary put him in the manger.

**DADDY:** I do too, Peggy. Christmas is when we celebrate Jesus' birth. That is an important part of the story, but you know Jesus didn't just come to earth to be born in a stable. He came to save the people of the world from their sins by dying on a cross.

**PAMELA:** But he didn't stay in the grave. He rose from the dead on the third day.

**DADDY:** That's exactly right, Pamela. In doing that, he opened the door for people to go to heaven. All they have to do is believe in him.

**MAMA:** The good news of his salvation is called the gospel. It's the message Jesus has called his followers to share with others.

**PEGGY:** In that case, I can't wait to take treats to the shelter so I can tell the people that Jesus loves them.

**MAMA:** Well, as soon as we get these cookies packed up, we can get going.

*PATSY, PAMELA, and PEGGY help MAMA put the cookies in the basket. When they finish, MAMA puts the basket over her arm again and the FAMILY exits the stage as the lights go out. The lights come back on as they return to the stage.*

**PATSY:** I think the people at the shelter really enjoyed the cookies.

**PAMELA:** I know. I almost cried when that one older man started talking about how he hadn't had a homemade chocolate chip cookie since his mama used to make them when he was a little boy.

**PEGGY:** A woman I talked to said she liked the sugar cookies the best.

*The KIDS go back to their games as "Silent Night" comes on the radio. When the song ends, MAMA gets up from her chair.*

**MAMA:** It's time for bed. You don't want to be yawning onstage during the Christmas program tomorrow, do you? Go on. Off to bed now.

**PATSY, PAMELA, and PEGGY:** (*Ad lib.*) Good night, Mama. Good night, Daddy.

**MAMA and DADDY:** (*Ad lib.*) Good night, kids. Sleep tight! Don't let the bedbugs bite! (*Etc.*)

*The lights go out.*

### SCENE 3

**AT START:** *The lights come up on the 1950s living room. It's Christmas morning, and MAMA and DADDY are sitting and watching the KIDS open their presents. PETER plays with his Mr. Potato Head.*

**PEGGY:** Thank you for the Gerber Baby doll! It's just what I wanted!

**PAMELA:** A hula hoop!

**PATSY:** *The Chronicles of Narnia!* Oh, thank you! I can't wait to read them.

*The KIDS open a few more presents. When they finish, PAMELA gets up and goes to MAMA and DADDY.*

**PAMELA:** Thank you for the presents, Mama and Daddy—especially the ice skates. (*To PATSY and PEGGY.*) Come on! Let's go try them out!

**PATSY and PEGGY:** (*Together.*) Thank you!

*All three GIRLS hug MAMA and DADDY before leaving the room. As the GIRLS leave, the lights go out. Then the GIRLS come back in.*

**PATSY:** Whew! The wind has really picked up out there!

**PAMELA:** (*Shivers.*) Yeah, total freezerville! Brrrr!

*DADDY notices that the youngest of the three girls, PEGGY, is giggling. He folds the paper he's reading and lays it aside.*

**DADDY:** What's so funny, Peggy?

**PEGGY:** (*Still giggling.*) When we were skating, we were all holding hands in a line spinning around. I was on the end, and they lost me, and I fell in the snow. It was a big tickle!

*MAMA looks up from her knitting, alarmed.*

**MAMA:** What do you mean they lost you? Did you get lost? Are you hurt?

**PAMELA:** She's fine, Mama. She means Patsy was skating so fast she got slung off, just like if she was on a merry-go-round. It was so funny we almost busted a gut!

**PATSY:** (*Giggles and playfully slaps PAMELA's arm.*) You're the one who let go of her hand. It was your fault.

**MAMA:** I don't care whose fault it was. Girls, how many times have I told you not to play games like that on the ice—especially with your little sister? What if she hadn't landed in the snow? Suppose she had landed on the ice and broken a bone. I don't want you doing that out there on the ice. Do you hear me?

**PATSY, PAMELA, and PEGGY:** (*Together.*) Yes, ma'am.

**DADDY:** Evelyn... Evelyn, you worry too much. All kids get dirty once in a while. They might even break a bone or two. Just let 'em be kids. Besides, it's Christmas day.

**MAMA:** You're right, Edward. It is Christmas day, and if we don't get a move on, the church Christmas program is going to be short a few performers.

**PATSY:** I can't wait to play Mary this year! Did Mrs. Miller tell you that we're using her baby, Roger, as baby Jesus this year? He's so cute! And I get to hold him through the whole play.

**PAMELA:** Except when he's lying in the manger. The Bible does say that Mary laid Jesus in the manger, so you'll have to put him down for at least some of the play.

**PEGGY:** Why couldn't I be Mary?

**PAMELA:** Because you're too young, silly. You might drop the baby.

**PEGGY:** No, I wouldn't! I carry my doll around all the time, and I *never* drop her.

**PAMELA:** Well, holding a real baby is different than holding a doll. Real babies are heavier—especially when they squirm. And you never know when a real baby will start crying.

**MAMA:** All right, that's enough. Go change into your costumes now. Go on. Shoo!

*MAMA walks behind the GIRLS, making shooing motions as the KIDS exit and the lights go out.*

#### SCENE 4

**AT START:** *The lights come up on the present-day living room.*

**EMILY:** So, did he?

**NANA:** Did who do what?

**EMILY:** Did baby Roger squirm and cry during the play?

**NANA:** No, he didn't. He actually slept through the whole thing. He was the best baby Jesus.

**KATIE:** Wait, did you say the baby's name was Roger Miller? Is that the Mr. Roger who goes to our church and built the stable for our Christmas play?

**NANA:** It sure is. He grew up to be a carpenter just like Joseph, Jesus' earthly father.

**BRITNEY:** That's cool!

**EMILY:** I think it's cool that you used a real baby for baby Jesus.

**ALEXIS:** Well, I'm glad we use a doll for baby Jesus now. That way I won't have to worry about a crying baby wiggling around on my lap.



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